

## Elite Opponents

**Wyverns**

By Andy Collins



This column aims to provide DMs with interesting opponents to pit against the PCs in their campaigns. Building off of a simple base -- typically a standard monster from the *Monster Manual* -- each column uses the building blocks provided in the rulebooks to craft a variety of foes. Through the addition of class levels or templates, or even via simple HD advancement, the creatures presented in this column are transformed from run-of-the-mill opponents into memorable foes. Check out this column every month for formidable enemies built from a different monster!

**The Wyvern: Death on the Wing**

This month, our base creature is the wyvern -- a cousin to the dragon that has the savage demeanor of a simple predatory animal. Though rather stupid, the wyvern possesses the tremendous physical strength and toughness of its draconic relations.

Wyverns typically prey on deer, goats, and other creatures of similar size, though some have been known to feast on horses or cattle as well. These dragonlike beasts have little fear of humanoids, though they are smart enough to learn the difference between armored and unarmored victims.

Powerful warriors sometimes seek to tame wyverns as mounts, but such pursuits almost invariably fail because the creatures take poorly to training. In fact, more than one would-be wyvern rider has succumbed to multiple poison stings from an angry mount! Still, with enough protection, willpower, and magic (such as *charm monster*) available, it might be possible to pull off this feat.

This column presents five different wyvern variants ranging from the skeletal wyvern at CR 3 to the great wyvern at CR 14. Some of these creatures share the base wyvern's simple, savage approach to life, while others have widely differing mindsets. These wyverns can be further adjusted by adding HD or templates as desired.

**Skeletal Wyvern**

A skeletal wyvern poses very little threat compared to a living one, though its poison is just as deadly to

those who fail to resist it. The creature has none of the aggressiveness it possessed in life; it seeks only to obey its master's orders. Some necromancers use skeletal wyverns as mounts, despite their lack of flying ability. Others rely on the creatures as sentries, since they retain much of their sensory capability. Since a skeletal wyvern is incapable of making a flyby attack, it cannot use its talons as weapons and therefore cannot use its improved grab ability.

The skeletal wyvern uses the skeletal dragon template presented in *Draconomicon*.

**Skeletal Wyvern:** CR 3; Large undead (augmented dragon); HD 7d12+7; hp 52; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 13, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (1d6+4 plus poison, sting) or +10 melee (2d8+4, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+4 plus poison, sting) and +5 melee (2d8+4, bite) and +5 melee (1d8+2, 2 wings); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA poison; SQ damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunities (cold, paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, scent, undead traits; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 19, Dex 12, Con --, Int --, Wis 10, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide -3; Improved Initiative.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Undead Traits:** A skeletal dragon is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects or is harmless. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage to its physical ability scores, ability drain, energy drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or death from massive damage. It cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. Darkvision 60 ft.

## Celestial Wyvern

Many adventurers mistakenly believe the wyvern to be a wholly evil creature. In truth, though it is certainly savage and aggressive, the typical wyvern has no leaning toward evil or any other alignment. In fact, a small population of noble and ferocious wyverns exists on the upper planes -- most notably the Wilderness of the Beastlands. Here, on the dusky layer of Brux, flights of celestials wyverns soar through the skies, their sparkling scales reflecting the sunlight. Some spellcasters have learned to summon these creatures, and particularly brave heroes occasionally try to tame them for mounts.

At the DM's option, a spellcaster can substitute celestials wyvern for avoral guardinal on the *summon monster VII* list. Furthermore, an 11th-level or higher paladin may be able to summon a celestials wyvern as a special mount (see Unusual Mounts on page 204 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details on such options).

A celestials wyvern's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Celestial Wyvern:** CR 7; Large dragon (extraplanar); HD 7d12+14; hp 59; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +7; Grp +15; Atk +10 melee (1d6+4 plus poison, sting) or +10 melee (2d6+4, talon) or +10 melee (2d8+4, bite); Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+4 plus poison, sting) and +8

melee (2d8+4, bite) and +8 melee (1d8+2, 2 wings) and +8 melee (2d6+4, 2 talons) or +10 melee (2d6+4, 2 talons) or +10 melee (2d8+4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA improved grab, poison, smite evil; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., immunities (paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, resistance to acid 5, cold 5, and electricity 5, scent, spell resistance 12; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 9.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +7, Listen +13, Move Silently +11, Spot +16; Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Flyby Attack, Multiattack.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a celestial wyvern must hit with its talons. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and stings.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 17, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Smite Evil (Su):** Once per day, a celestial wyvern can make a normal melee attack to deal 7 points of extra damage against an evil foe.

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## Corrupted Wyvern

Twisted by malevolent forces beyond imagining, the corrupted wyvern is irrevocably tainted by evil. Its talons, stinger, and jaws are hideously oversized, its flesh is mottled and puckered, and its eyes are red with anger. Even more aggressive and vicious than a typical wyvern, the corrupted wyvern enjoys toying with prey before finishing it off. It often uses hit-and-run tactics over the course of hours or even days, gradually weakening its victim with vile wounds that refuse to heal.

The corrupted creature template appears in *Book of Vile Darkness*. A corrupted wyvern's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

**Corrupted Wyvern:** CR 8; Large aberration (augmented dragon); HD 7d12+28; hp 73; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +7; Grp +17; Atk +12 melee (1d8+6 plus 3 vile plus poison, sting) or +12 melee (3d6+6 plus 3 vile, talon) or +12 melee (3d8+6 plus 3 vile, bite); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+6 plus 3 vile plus poison, sting) and +10 melee (3d8+6 plus 3 vile, bite) and +10 melee (2d6+3 plus 3 vile, 2 wings) and +10 melee (3d6+6 plus 3 vile, 2 talons) or +12 melee (3d6+6 plus 3 vile, 2 talons) or +12 melee (3d8+6 plus 3 vile, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA improved grab, poison; SQ damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., disruptive attack, enhanced power, fast healing 3, immunities (acid, paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +6, Listen +12, Move Silently +10, Spot +15; Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Flyby Attack, Multiattack.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a wyvern must hit with its talons. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it

establishes a hold and stings.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 23, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +4 bonus from the corrupted template.

**Disruptive Attack (Su):** A corrupted wyvern deals 3 points of vile damage when it touches uncorrupted, living, corporeal nonoutsiders.

**Enhanced Power (Su):** The save DC for each of the corrupted wyvern's special attacks increases by +4 (already included in the values given).

**Fast Healing (Ex):** The corrupted wyvern regains hit points at the rate of 3 per round. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow the creature to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

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## Half-Troll/Half-Wyvern

Created by a mad wizard, this horrifying crossbreed all but defines "that which should not exist." It has all the wyvern's natural ferocity, plus the troll's hardiness. The thick, knobby hide of a half-troll/half-wyvern has a distinct green tint, and its snout is somewhat elongated.

Unfortunately for the world, the wizard did not stop at one of these abominations -- he created a breeding pair, which promptly broke free of their enclosure. Since that day, their spawn have spread throughout the land. Thankfully, half-troll/half-wyverns possess little of the wyvern's natural stealth, so they must rely on brute strength to win their battles.

The half-troll template appears in *Fiend Folio*.

**Half-Troll/Half-Wyvern:** CR 8; Large giant (augmented dragon); HD 7d12+35; hp 80; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +7; Grp +18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+7 plus poison, sting) or +13 melee (2d6+7, talon) or +13 melee (2d8+7, bite); Full Atk +13 melee (1d6+7 plus poison, sting) and +11 melee (2d8+3, bite) and +11 melee (1d8+3, 2 wings) and +11 melee (2d6+3, 2 talons) or +13 melee (2d6+7, 2 talons) or +13 melee (2d8+7, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA improved grab, poison, rend 2d6+10; SQ darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, immunities (paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 25, Dex 14, Con 21, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 7.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide -2, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Spot +11; Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Flyby Attack, Multiattack.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a wyvern must hit with its talons. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and stings.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Rend (Ex):** If the half-troll/half-wyvern hits with both talon attacks against the same opponent, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals 2d6+10 points of additional damage.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** A half-troll/half-wyvern heals 5 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow the creature to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

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## Great Wyvern

The largest wyverns grow to nearly 30 feet in length from nose to tail and have wingspans up to 50 feet. These terrifying beasts can snatch and carry off horses and cattle with ease, and sometimes they even prey on young copper dragons. Even adult copper dragons think twice about tangling with a wyvern of this size, often preferring to seek new territory rather than challenge such a beast.

The great wyvern is an advanced version of the wyvern detailed in the *Monster Manual*.

**Great Wyvern:** CR 14; Huge dragon; HD 21d12+84; hp 220; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +21; Grp +37; Atk +27 melee (2d6 +8 plus poison, sting) or +27 melee (4d8+8, bite) or +27 melee (4d6+8, talon); Full Atk +27 melee (2d6 +8 plus poison, sting) and +25 melee (4d8+8, bite) and +25 melee (2d6+4, 2 wings) and +27 melee (4d6+8, 2 talons) or +27 melee (4d8+4, bite) or +27 melee (4d6+4, 2 talons); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA improved grab, poison; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunities (paralysis, sleep), low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +16, Ref +12, Will +13; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Hide +16, Listen +27, Move Silently +24, Spot +30; Ability Focus (poison), Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Armor (x2), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (sting), Improved Natural Attack (talon), Multiattack.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a great wyvern must hit with its talons. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and stings.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 26, initial and secondary damage 2d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

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## About the Author

By day, Andy Collins works as a senior designer in the Roleplaying R&D department at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. His credits include the *Player's Handbook* v.3.5, the *Epic Level Handbook*, and the *Draconomicon*. By night, however, he fights crime as a masked vigilante. Or maybe not.

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